



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PHILIPPINES

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

TRANSFORMING THE MARINE AQUARIUM TRADE IN THE PHILIPPINES (TMAT)

BACKGROUND

The Philippines, along with Indonesia, supplies the vast majority of marine ornamental fish exports, 98% of which come from the wild. The United States is the world's largest importer of marine ornamentals. Unsustainable collecting practices and poor husbandry of aquarium organisms affect the potential for balancing reef health, sustainable fisheries, and development benefits. Certification and best practice standards can ensure that the trade in marine ornamentals is environmentally sound and sustainable and presents an unprecedented opportunity to contribute to the strategic needs for sustainable economy and environment in the Philippines.

Marine Aquarium Council (MAC) certified marine ornamentals are now moving through MAC certified chains of custody "... from 'reef to retail,' enabling consumers to identify and reward responsible businesses through their purchase of MAC certified marine aquarium organisms, i.e., those that were collected, handled and transported in a sustainable manner. These market forces can help achieve sustainable development in hundreds of coastal villages in the Philippines. The challenge now is to build on successful pilot efforts in order to build a critical mass of MAC certified collectors and collection areas in the Philippines. Three critical issues must be addressed in the Philippines to mainstream certification:

- 1) Lack of training and insufficient skill levels for collectors to become certified;
- 2) Inadequate stakeholder capacity to develop management for collection areas; and
- 3) Insufficient capacity at MAC and its partners to mainstream certification.

Visit our website:

www.usaid-ph.gov

keywords: *marine aquarium trade*

PURPOSE

TMAT's goal is to transform the marine aquarium trade in the Philippines to sustainability through MAC certification for marine ornamental collectors and collection areas. This MAC-led TMAT partnership will result in mainstreaming MAC certification by: 1) Ensuring collectors have the information and training to become MAC certified; 2) Ensuring community stakeholders are able to develop and implement MAC certified ecosystem management for collection areas; and 3) Ensuring MAC and its partners have the capacity to develop, coordinate, and implement the TMAT project.



ACTIVITIES

A MAC-led Alliance for "Transforming the Marine Aquarium Trade (TMAT)" will address these needs through an innovative, multi-stakeholder program that brings together significant new collaboration,



resources, and partners: Philippine Tropical Fish Exporters Association (PTFEA); U.S. Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council (PIJAC); Marine Aquarium Societies of North America (MASNA); World Wildlife Fund; Reef Check; and the Philippine Bureau of Fisheries and Aquaculture (BFAR). These partnerships, and the economic incentives underlying

environmental certification, will allow the results of these efforts to expand and be sustainable well beyond the three-year TMAT project.

The TMAT project in the Philippines will build on the MAC pilot certification efforts and targeting collection areas/collectors groups for transformation at the following rate: First year -10 sites; Second year -20 sites; Third year -30 sites (for a total of 60 sites in three years).

MORE INFO:

Cooperator: Marine Aquarium Council

Arun Abraham, Director of Asia Pacific Operations

6th Fl., Salustiana D. Ty Tower

Makati City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Telefax 817-9541 E-mail: arun.abraham@aquariumcouncil.org

Mechanism : Cooperative Agreement **Period Covered:** Oct. 2003-Sept. 2006